1:Gurdon E-4.5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

the streams. Khasis, except the Wárs and the people of Shella, unlike the Assamese and Bengalis, do not fish with nets, nor do they use the bamboo-work device known by the Assamese as *palo* (পলু) and *jak* (জাক). The method of fish-poisoning of the Khasis is the same as that described by Soppitt in his account of the tribes inhabiting North Cachar. The following is a description of how Khasis poison fish in the western portion of the district; it may be taken as a sample of the whole. A large quantity of the bark of the tree *la sopte* and the creeper *u kharáw* is first brought to the river-side to a place on the stream a little above the pool which it is proposed to poison, where it is thoroughly beaten with sticks till the juice exudes and flows into the water, the juice being of a milky white colour. In a few minutes the fish begin to rise and splash about, and, becoming stupefied, allow themselves to be caught in the shallows. If the beating of the bark has been well carried out, many of the fish soon die and after a time float on the surface of the water. A large number of Khasis stand on the banks armed with bamboo scoops shaped like small landing nets, to catch the fish, and fish traps (*ki khawar*) Assamese *khalá* (খলা) are laid between the stones in the rapids to secure any fish that may escape the fishing party. Another fish poison is the leafy *u soh lúr*, the juice of which is beaten out in the same manner as described above.

Soppitt says, certain fish do not appear to be susceptible to the poison, and not nearly the destruction takes place that is popularly supposed. The mahseer and the carp family generally do not suffer much, whereas, on the other hand, the river shark, the *bagh mas* of the Bengalis, is killed in large numbers. It is impossible, however, in the opinion of the writer, that the mahseer fry, which abound in these hill rivers in the spring and early summer months, can escape being destroyed in great numbers when the streams are frequently poisoned. In the neighbourhood of lime quarries and other large works where dynamite is used for blasting, this explosive is sometimes employed for killing fish. The practice, however, has been strictly prohibited, and there have been some cases in which the offenders have been punished in the courts. Fish-poisoning is bad enough, but dynamiting is still worse, as with an effective

I: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

wonderful mass of granite known by the name of the Kyllang Rock will be found in the section of the monograph which deals with geographical distribution. I have also added a photograph of the rock. The Syntengs have a story that when the strong west wind blows in the spring this is due to the advent of *U Kyllang*, who comes to visit his wife, the river *Umngot*, at that season: amongst the Khasis hills are all of them masculine, but to rivers is usually attributed the feminine gender. U Synper is another isolated rocky eminence rising from the Maharam plain close to the village of K'mawan. The best view of the hill is obtainable from Laitmawsiang on the path to Mawsynram. The village of Mawsmai every traveller from Therria to Cherrapunji knows. It is chiefly remarkable for a fairly large limestone cave, and its fine memorial stones. The Khasi theory to explain how the moon got its spots is, I believe, original, but is no more extraordinary than our own nursery tale about the "man in the moon." The *Sohpet Byrung* hill is the first hill of any size that the traveller sees on the Gauhati road when journeying to Shillong. It is close to Umsning Dak Bungalow. There are caves in the hill which are tenanted by bears. Strange to say, according to Khasi ideas, this is one of the highest points in the hills; in reality *Sophet Byrung* is some 2,000 ft. lower than the Shillong Peak. As mentioned elsewhere, the Khasis are very fond of dogs; so I have given their version of how the dog came to live with man. The well-known *Shlem* superstition will be found fully described under the heading of "Human sacrifices." I have, however, thought the tale of sufficient interest to reproduce at length here. The story of the river Rupatylli is a pretty tale, and is just such a one as would appeal to the imagination of mountaineers like the Khasis. The Kopili story is important, in that it indicates the origin of [illegible] in the Jaintia Hills; it also throws perhaps some light on the question of the use to which the flat table memorial stones were put in years gone by. The superstition about the crossing of the Kopili can be vouched for by many who have taken the journey from the Jaintia Hills to North Cachar by the Kopili route. Mawpunkyrtiang is a small village close to Cherrapunji. The weird tale about the Siem of Malyniang is the pride of the Maskut people, for in olden days their King,

4:Stegmiller-30 M-4,5(no date)1925 AR7KhasiAR7

won the money in the archery contest and now we should have a big feast. It is full moon now and much more beautiful during the night than the day. Oh, we are just having a good time." At once he swung his bunches of leaves and hopped away. The women take care of stirring the cooking pots. They are not choosy about the spoon. A bamboo, which a tired dancer might have just thrown away, is quite adequate for this purpose. When everything is ready, the people sit down in groups and eat the meat. Rice brandy is handed around. When the archers and other guests at the festival are more than sated and exhausted from all the dancing, they leave the place towards morning.

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It should be pointed out that contrary to their usual customs the Khasi eat no rice at the great feast after the archery competition but only meat, with which brandy is drunk. There is a good deal of overindulgence in food and drink on this occasion. (32)

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32. P.F. Stegmiller, "Das Fest nach dem Pfeilschiessen" /The Feast after the Archery Contest/, Salvatorianische Mitteilungen /Salvatorian Communications/, 1910, No. 3.

4. Hunting Customs

Although there are all sorts of wild animals in the Khasi hills and Jaintia hills that can be hunted -- flying foxes which visit the orange gardens during the night, jackals, which annoy the villages with their howling, antelopes, does, deer and wild pigs which damage the rice fields, wild dogs, wolves,

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224 bears, leopards and tigers, which seize their
•136 prey not merely among the goats and calves, but also among the grown cattle, and at times are even dangerous to man; although there are lots of tasty birds -- quails, partridges, lapwings, coots and wild geese -- in spite of all this the Khasi are not actually hunters. Only when an opportunity either presents itself to catch such birds, or when a wild animal has shown itself or even caused damage in the village, then the Khasi go hunting. Exceptions occur. The Khasi who use bows and arrows from childhood on, who practise shooting conscientiously, dare to hunt bears, leopards, and tigers. [621] Today they often have guns for this purpose, but bows and arrows are always taken along.

224 When a lucky day has been determined upon
187 by egg throwing, (33) and often the hunting area

33. Dr. P.C. Becker, "Das Eierwerfen der Khasi" [Egg Throwing Among the Khasi], Anthropos, 1917-1918, pp. 494 ff.

is often determined in this way, the Khasi set
224 out with a pack of hounds. As soon as the dogs have come upon the scent of the wild animal, the Khasi begin driving it with howlings and noise. The first shooter is lucky (called u nongsiat by the Khasi) because he gets the lion's share of the prey. Whoever is the second one to hit the animal (called u nongban by the Khasi) also receives special consideration. The other shooters divide the rest of the slain animal among themselves after the hunting dogs have each been given a piece. The Khasi are very persevering on the hunt and do not bother about the time or the distance. For the efforts expended on the hunt are richly rewarded by the

9.5—In the following paragraphs we have reproduced the yield rates of different crops, calculated on the basis of area harvested and total produce reported by the cultivators. For assessment of correct yield rates it is necessary to conduct a scientifically designed crops cutting survey which in view of its largeness in magnitude and other complexities associated with the type of experiments, could not be fitted in with the programme of the present survey. It is admitted that the yield estimates worked out by us are prone to be subjected to the usual limitations of this type of data.

Yield

1. **Paddy**.—It will be seen from table above that average yields of paddy per acre for Border area, General area and Project area are respectively 8.38 maunds, 12.97 maunds and 13.69 maunds and for the District as a whole it comes to 11.86 maunds though there are cases where maximum yield goes to above 18 maunds per acre. This is a area that the average yield is much less than the average yield for the State of Assam (plain district) which is above 20 maunds per acre. Average yield in Border area is evidently much smaller. Apart from low fertility of land, another reason for this low average is that in a number of villages adjoined from Border area such as Syndai, Autki and Lumdurong, there was widespread havoc to standing crops was caused by wild elephants.

2. **Potato**.—The average for the three areas comes to 21.61 maunds per acre which is in contrast to the State average of above 40 maunds per acre. Our estimate has in fact been lowered due to inclusion of a few villages in the foot hills where potatoes don't grow well, otherwise in a number of high altitude villages, yield per acre well exceeded 40 maunds. The average for Border area is rather too low. Apart from unsuitability of Border land of high altitude potatoes another reason for this low average is that during the reference year the crop suffered from widespread incidence of pests and insects.

3. **Orange**.—Yield of oranges in Border area, Project area and General area was found to be 3.87 lakhs or 5906 numbers against 16.74 lakhs or 17162 numbers and 2.80 lakhs or 2867 numbers respectively. Thus the average yield in Border area, even considering the scanty nature of some gardens is much low. The reasons are obvious.

4. **Betelnut**.—Average yield per acre from Border area, Project area and General area was found to be 2.89 lakhs (18702 numbers), 4.11 lakhs (26304 numbers) and 3.48 lakhs (19502 numbers) respectively bringing the average for all the three areas to 3.99 lakhs per acre.

5. **Betel leaf**.—Average yield per acre works out at 17.25 lakhs, 50.04 lakhs and 24 lakhs in Border area, Project area and General area respectively. Thus in Border area the average is much lower. This is due to the fact that most of the gardens remained neglected for want of market for leaf.

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114. ACCOUNT OF KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS.

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(224)
(498)

(145)

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a Deputy, who reported unfavourably on them. They have since been made over to the Seas of Sylhet, who is responsible for their being kept clear of weeds and protected against fire. Up to the close of 1893-94 the total expenditure had been Rs. 6,72, or £672, an. est.

TIGER SCENES.—Tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, antlered or wild oxen, bears, leopards, wolves, jackals, foxes, wild dog, and several kinds of deer abound in the Khási and Jáintia Hills. The reports of keeping down tigers in the shape of Government rewards amounted to £224, viz. 98 in 1893-94. The rate of reward now paid is Rs. 25 or £2, viz. 98 per head. Six rewards have ever been given for the destruction of venomous serpents. The number of deaths from wild beasts and snakes reported to the police amounted to 18 in 1888-89, 18 in 1889-98, 16 in 1890-91, and 16 in 1893-94. The small game found in the Hills consists of black partridge, hill partridge, quails, ducks, teal, snipe, and woodcocks. The *mahsir* fish is caught in the rivers. No regular mode is carried on in the shape of wild animals; and, except in the case of wild elephants, the *fines* collected are not made to contribute towards the wealth of the people.

ELEPHANTS.—Wild elephants are found in the lower ranges of the hills, and in the gorges opening on the valleys of the Surmá and the Brahmaputra. Each State in the Khási Hills and each Jaintia chief in the Jáintia Hills constitutes a separate hunting circle or *mahál*. In the Khási States the conditions of elephant hunting are governed by rules framed in 1893-94 by the Chief Commissioner, and approved by the Government of India. These rules provide, (*a*) that the British Government will make no claim to royalty on account of elephants caught in the Khási Hills; (*b*) that one half of the proceeds of the sale of each elephant caught shall be paid over to the chief whose State forms the *mahál*, and the other half retained by Government; (*c*) that if a chief wishes to hunt elephants on his own account, the *mahál* comprised of his State shall be removed from sale, and a special arrangement shall be made with him on the basis that half the proceeds of the hunting shall accrue to Government. A special form of hunting licence in accordance with these rules has been settled by the Chief Commissioner. In the Jáintia Hills, as being British territory, the ordinary Assam rules are in force, in accordance with which leases of the *mahál* are sold at intervals of two years to the highest bidder at

crops of waste land, some is cultivated in a manner resembling the *jum* system,—successive crops are grown on a patch of land till the soil is exhausted, and then another spot is selected, where the same process is repeated afresh, but without anything that can be called a *jhúm* system. Any waste of land is exceptional, and there are no recognised rates of rent. The Deputy-Commissioner, however, states that an ordinary rate for rented land would be from two to three shillings a year for as much land as an individual can cultivate with his own hands. 928 (927)

Manure is generally used in mixing rice and potatoes. It is either purchased, the dung and litter of the cattle and other animals about the house being generally utilized for the purpose. For rice fields a little less than half a ton of manure, but for potatoes upwards of one ton, is required per acre. Manure, if purchased, would cost from 2s. 6d. to 5s. 6d. per acre for rice land, and for potato fields from 10s. to 18s. per acre. 243 244 (935)

Irrigation for agricultural purposes is regularly practised. Water is brought to the land by means of channels cut from the numerous hill streams in the neighbourhood of the fields. Wells and tanks are unknown. The work of irrigation by means of these channels is very easily carried on, and at a very trifling outlay. Rotation of crops is not practised in the Hills. 312

Model Farm.—The Shillong Model Farm, established in 1879, has not proved a success. Experiments tried with wheat give some hope that cold-weather crops may profitably be introduced into the Hills. Two new varieties of grain—"red maize" and "pheasant's eye"—were successfully introduced in 1879-80; but these are not looked upon favourably by the Khásis, as they only give one crop in the year, whereas the ordinary variety yields two crops. Several fruit-trees have been planted out, including apple, pear, cherry, nectarine, and plum; and the tables of the European residents are supplied with vegetables from the garden attached to the farm. *A Manual of Plain Cultivation* compiled by the superintendent has been translated into Assamese, and copies have been distributed among the adjoining Hill tribes. The general failure in all the agricultural experiments is attributed partly to the unfitness of the soil, and still more to the ravages of crop-pests and other insects peculiar to the Hills. The attempts to improve the indigenous breeds of live stock have been equally unfortunate. During the two years 1879-80 the sum of Rs. 1700 was, in 177 244 677 654 177 245 641 654 [134] [136] 231 643 654